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Unity of the *Aeneis*: *Dum Conderet Urbem*

Vergil's *Aeneis* has been a perennial source of inquiry and controversy among classical critics. T. E. Page characterizes the epic as "wanting in vitality and human interest,"¹ "unhappy in its hero,"² and redeemed only by its melodious rhythms and literary expression. Mark Van Doren feels that Vergil's style is his sole contribution to European poetry. "Aeneas," he writes, "does not move under his own power any more than the poem does."³

Such criticism views the epic story as little more than a clumsy chronicle expressed in elegant language. Yet Vergil is not a mere chronicler. He has taken a remotely national legend and treated it in such a way that we feel a greater theme to be somehow present in it. This theme is the divine mission of Aeneas. He is a Trojan refugee (*Troiae qui primus*) with a destiny to fulfill (*fato profugus*). For Aeneas, this mission is everything.

The Problem of Unity

Vergilian scholars have studied the problem of unity in the *Aeneis* from various points of view: Conway and Duckworth pointed out a structural unity in the "architecture" of the poem; earlier, Heinze had found the unifying principle in the evolution of Aeneas' character; more recently, Pöschl has revealed, through an examination of the imagery and symbolism, an aesthetic unity of feeling.

This essay aims to establish the vocation of Aeneas as the unifying principle of the *Aeneis*. This concept of vocation constantly recurs in the epic—a concept charged with meaning, and perhaps with more meaning than Vergil himself imagined. Vocation is not determinism, since it demands acceptance and dutiful response. Each man has his own vocation, but Aeneas is the man of vocation, for upon him

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the glorious future of the western world depends. His is a divine election which cannot be explained, a burden and a responsibility rather than a reason for self-glorification. His mission is something neither to be desired nor shunned. When we view the poem with this large theme in mind, then the *Aeneis* presents an organic unity which even the sternest critics could not condemn and which students of Aristotle could only praise.

Aristotle is clear on the classical requirement of epic unity: "In the epic, as in tragedy, the story should be constructed on dramatic principles; everything should turn about a single action, one that is whole and organically perfect."⁴ This single action in the *Aeneis* is the hero's response to the divine call to suffer much:

. . . dum conderet urbem
inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae (2.5-7).

The Mission as Unifying Device

This mission is not merely to return home in the face of many obstacles as Odysseus did: "one went home and the other sought a home."⁵ Aeneas travelled to find a home from which would flow the Western spirit and world peace

(*gentem togatam*). This note, sounded at the beginning of the *Aeneis*, is repeated again and again as the theme unfolds. It reaches a climax when Jupiter comforts Juno:

Hinc genus Ausonio mixtum quod sanguine surget,
supra homines, supra ire deos pietate videbis
nec genus ulla tuos aequae celebravit honores
(12.838-840).

The meaning is clear: civilization was not meant to perish in the ashes of Troy, although the true significance of that disaster was to be comprehended only when Aeneas' quest for his new home was ended. Until then, he learned the meaning of his call by vague and shadowy hints. Hector appears in a vision, covered with blood and wounds, and urges Aeneas to escape from Troy and to carry with him its gods (*Penates*):

... his moenia quaere
magna, pererrato statues quae denique ponto
(2.294-295).

When the hero is about to kill Spartan Helen, Venus, his goddess mother, reminds him of Troy's fated ruin, but promises safety:

Eripe, nate, fugam, finemque impone labori:
nusquam abero, et tutum patrio te limine sistam
(2.619-620).

Creusa's form appears and bids her husband to cease his search for her and to move on in his journey to that distant land (*terram Hesperiam*) where greatness awaits him and his followers.

Delian Apollo answers Aeneas' prayer for a home by telling him and the sons of Dardanus to seek the land which was their ancient mother (*antiquam matrem*). Here Aeneas is told that his descendants will rule a great empire (*cunctis dominabitur oris*), but yet it is still not clear where this land is. Apollo's oracle sends him wandering first to Crete, then past the new town of Helenus and Andromache, along the coast of Magna Graecia and Sicily, and across to Carthage.

When Jupiter sees Aeneas' passion for Dido, he summons Mercury to remind Aeneas of his great mission; if he no longer has the ambition to fulfill his call, he has no right to ruin his son's hopes. At Sicily Anchises appears in the night and bids his discouraged son to sail to Italy with his bravest followers. There he is to appeal to the Sibyl, and, with her as guide, seek Anchises in Elysium that he may learn his fortune.

Tum genus omne tuum, et, quae dentur moenia,
disces (5.737).

In Hades Anchises points out souls who are fated to become famous Romans and tells their names and exploits. He concludes by promising Rome world empire:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subjectis et debellare superbos (6.851-853).

Finally Tiberinus tells Aeneas that he has at last reached his new home:

Hic tibi certa domus, certi—ne absiste—Penates
(8.39).

As a sign of this, the hero shall find a white sow lying on the bank with thirty young. Indeed, Aeneas' search is "the very portrait of a vocation: a thing that calls or beckons; that calls inexorably, yet you must strain your ears to catch the voice, that insists on being sought, yet refuses to be found."⁶

Aeneas is to undergo many trials (*multa quoque et bello passus*) in the fulfillment of his mission, for it is a burden to found the Roman race. In the hero's response to this call we find a persevering devotion to duty (*pietas*). Aeneas suffers and obeys to fulfill his awesome call. He barely escapes the ruin of Troy. He sails on in his seemingly futile journey to found a home. He envies those not called to this mission:

Vivite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta
iam sua! nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur:
vobis parva quies, nullum maris aequor arandum,
arva neque Ausoniae semper cedentia retro
quaerenda (3.493-497).

Growing awareness of the divine summons urges him forward in spite of his love for Dido (*labefactus amore*). His ships are burned; he suffers the desertion of his comrades in Sicily and the death of Palinurus. When he thinks his quest is finished, Anchises tells him:

... gens dura atque aspera cultu
debellanda tibi Latio est (5.730-731).

In the land of the west, nations destined for peace clash in fearful war, and only the death of Turnus assures peace and order.

Aeneas' Heeding of the Call

Aeneas learned by experience that to follow a vocation does not mean happiness; but once the call is heard, there can be no happiness for those who do not heed. Aeneas emerges before us as a man whose mission permeates all his

actions throughout the epic. What, then, is the relation of this theme to the poem's structure? How does the divine mission explain the unity of the *Aeneis*? If the theory suggested here is valid (that Aeneas' vocation is the epic's underlying principle of unity), then it would be well to review the entire plot in its light, before examining the difficulties it raises.

Aristotle states that in an epic the plot, which is an imitation of an action, must represent an action that is unified—"having a beginning, and a middle, and an end."⁷ The beginning, or starting-point, of the *Aeneis* is clearly expressed by Vergil. He skillfully sets before us the situation, when he depicts Jupiter in heaven pointing out Aeneas as the man chosen to found Rome:

'Parce metu, Cytherea: manent immota tuorum
fata tibi; cernes urbem et promissa Lavini
moenia, sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli
magnanimum Aenean; neque me sententia vertit.
hic tibi—fabor enim, quando haec te cura remordet,
longius et volvens fatorum arcana movebo—
bellum ingens geret Italia populosque feroces
contundet, moresque viris et moenia ponet'
(1.257-264).

The characters are introduced: fierce Juno with her deep hatred for Troy and Aeneas; Venus, the grieving goddess-mother of the hero; Jupiter, who wills that Aeneas establish his city walls and his way of life in Italy, and whose will is supreme; Aeneas the true, who has recognized the divine call and will not be deterred from fulfilling it. The struggle begins when angry Juno hurls the hero and his band on the shore of Carthage. This is the starting-point, and it is well marked; there is no vagueness or uncertainty about the direction in which the hero begins to move: he must fulfill his vocation to found a city.

Rome and the World

The *Aeneis* has a middle in the Aristotelian sense: Aeneas overcomes the obstacles preventing the perfect fulfillment of his vocation and recognizes more clearly the exact nature of his call. He manfully faces all hindrances and bravely pushes on. When in Book 6 Anchises discloses to Aeneas the fullness of his mission (*regere*), we realize that it is not the fate of a few refugees from Troy which is at stake; it is the entire course of civilization, in the process

of which the Roman empire was to be the consummation.

The death of Turnus marks the end of the *Aeneis*, for this is the final issue of the long struggle to found a city. Aeneas overcomes the last obstacle placed against him in Italy by his brave and persevering deeds in war. The fierce Juno succumbs to the power of destiny: *nunc cedo equidem pugnasque exosa relinquo* (12. 818). The death of Turnus completes the triumph of Aeneas, for now the last opposition to his goal has been met and conquered.⁸ Now peace is assured, and the paths of knowledge and government opened: *pacisque imponere morem*.

Concluding Questions

Viewed in the light of Aeneas' vocation, the epic theme exhibits a remarkable unity. Yet certain difficulties against this interpretation may be urged. For example: is every part of the *Aeneis* necessary and in its place? An incident whose presence or absence makes no perceptible difference is not an organic part of the poem.⁹ Does the *Aeneis* end too abruptly, or does it end at all?

Episodes in Vergil's epic are a problem for many critics. Alexandrine epics were often ruined in this way, and thus degenerated into little more than collections of short stories. In a truly great epic, episodes appear, not as loosely constructed digressions, but as carefully planned contributions to the central theme.¹⁰ They proceed from the plot truly and necessarily, and thereby contribute something to the whole.¹¹ Thus in the Dido episode, Vergil tells how his hero overcame this formidable obstacle to his mission. Here Aeneas is no abstraction. He loved Dido deeply, but he can reply to her outbursts only in this declaration:

Italiam non sponte sequor (4.361).

Two other episodes—of Nisus and Euryalus in Book 9, and of Camilla in Book 11—again show how Vergil succeeds in illuminating the main theme by subsidiary actions. Both these episodes, of course, reveal the heroic virtue of ancient warriors; but we must bear in mind that they, too, were people with missions. Nisus and Euryalus met their deaths in trying to aid Aeneas; Camilla met her death because she allowed a woman's passion for color (*femineo*

amore) to distract her blindly (*caeca*) from her purpose.

Why did Vergil not begin the tale of Aeneas with the sack of Troy? Why did he tell of the doomed city and the wanderings of its refugees by way of a flashback? He saw the need of epic unity and realized that Troy's fall was too remote to advance the single action of a national epic of Rome. He anticipated, too, that his Roman readers were already familiar with the Homeric story. Again, had he arranged his epic in chronological order, the reader would have been hastened along from the spectacle of Troy in flames to Aeneas' triumph in Italy without the clear and detailed introduction which the landing on the shores of Carthage provides.

Final Attainment

The argument that the *Aeneis* lacks a proper conclusion is weak. Vergil realized that significant events are not sharply broken off. Happenings of real historical worth do not end suddenly, but perdure into the future.¹² Aeneas' mission did not end with the death of Turnus. "Aeneas' end is only a new beginning; and the whole point of the pilgrimage is something which will come to pass for future generations. . . . For he is, humbly, a man with a mission; and the mission is everything."¹³

Thus the vocation of Aeneas provides the unifying force which binds the twelve books into an organic whole. The hero recognized his divine mission to found a city and establish there a new way of life. The plot of the *Aeneis* depicts his struggles to accomplish that goal.

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NOTES

- 1 T. E. Page, *The Aeneid of Virgil* (London 1956) xix.
- 2 Ibid. xvii.
- 3 Mark Van Doren, *The Noble Voice* (New York 1946) 104.
- 4 Arist. *Poet.*, translated by Lane Cooper (Boston 1913) 23.
- 5 John Dryden, *Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London 1939) 239.
- 6 C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Cambridge 1954) 37.
- 7 Arist. *Poet.* 7.
- 8 R. S. Conway, *Harvard Lectures on the Vergilian Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928) 143.
- 9 Arist. *Poet.* 8.
- 10 Conway, op. cit. (*supra*, note 8) 133.
- 11 Richard Heinze, *Virgils Epische Technik* (Stuttgart 1957) 438.
- 12 Conway, op. cit. (*supra*, note 8) 133.
- 13 T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London 1957) 128.

Homeric References in the *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus

Hippolytus was born about 160 A.D. His descent, whether Greek or Roman, cannot be established.¹ Bishop Irenaeus was his teacher, while he himself in turn is said to have taught Origen. Pope Victor recognized his talents and employed his services. When Zephyrinus ascended to the papacy, he dismissed Hippolytus, and placed Callistus² in high position, a man with whom Hippolytus disagreed vehemently on the interpretation of the Trinity. When Callistus became Pope, Hippolytus attacked him openly and accused him of heresy. Thereupon Hippolytus severed his connection with the Church, and his followers, who included many prominent and influential people, went along with him. By this group he was chosen opposition-bishop of Rome. This schism endured for thirteen years (222-235 A.D.), and was not healed until the persecutions by the Emperor Maximinus³ (235-238 A.D.) forced the two factions to abandon their mutual grievances and to seek preservation and safety in their unity. Along with other leaders in the Church, Hippolytus was exiled by the Emperor to Sardinia. Owing to the unhealthful conditions which then prevailed in Sardinia, Hippolytus' exile was tantamount to a death-sentence. Here, then, Hippolytus died in, or shortly before, the year 238 A.D. as a martyr to his faith.

Hippolytus was a very learned man in both theological and secular subjects: he was exegete, preacher, and poet, as well as philosopher, astronomer, and historian. He was a prolific writer. Hieronymus has preserved the titles of nineteen of his books and has made reference to several more. He wrote in Greek, and, as a result of this fact, his influence soon waned. After two centuries the Latin church could no longer understand his writings because of the rapid decline of Greek studies that had taken place.

An Interesting Work

Perhaps the most interesting of the extant works of Hippolytus is his so-called *Philosophumena*, which is also known by another title, *Omnium Haeresium Refutatio*. This great work originally consisted of ten books, of which all

but Books 2 and 3 have now been recovered. Book 1 has long been known, probably because it was formerly believed to have been written by Origen; the text exists in four MSS, representing two lines of descent. In 1842 Mynoides Mynas, who was engaged by the French government to seek out and purchase ancient manuscripts in the Orient, brought to Paris among other treasures a fourteenth-century manuscript from Mount Athos. This contained Books 4-10 of the *Philosophumena* and, among other matters, established the authorship of Hippolytus.

The alternative title, *Omnium Haeresium Refutatio*, gives a good indication of the purpose of this work, namely, to point out that the founders of the various heresies based their teachings, not on Christ and the Scriptures, but rather on philosophy, astrology, and the mysteries.

Variety of Quotations

Hippolytus quotes from and refers to a considerable number of Greek writers of both prose and poetry. In fact, Books 1 and 4 consist to a considerable degree of almost verbatim excerpts. The chief source of Book 1 is Theophrastus; the first six chapters of Book 4 deviate hardly an iota from Sextus Empiricus' *Contra Mathematicos*. Of course, many of the sources of Hippolytus can no longer be identified, inasmuch as they have vanished in the intervening centuries. Nevertheless, it may be interesting to note the following sources, with which he was intimately acquainted: (1) The *Anacreontea*; (2) Aratus; (3) Aristotle (chiefly the *Categoriae*); (4) Democritus; (5) Empedocles; (6) Euripides (only frag. 1023); (7) Heraclitus; (8) Herodotus; (9) Hesiod; (10) Hippocrates; (11) Homer; (12) Josephus; (13) Orpheus; (14) Pherecydes of Syros; (15) Plato (chiefly *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*); (16) Plutarch; (17) Sextus Empiricus; (18) Theophrastus; (19) Xenophanes.

To this list may be added an anonymous Orphic verse and several other anonymous verses, which, in the expert opinion of Meineke, should be assigned to Parmenides. The accuracy of Hippolytus' quotations is amazing, especially when one reflects that in the main he

probably quoted from memory. To a classicist it is comforting, though perhaps a bit perplexing, that no quotation from Greek literature is nearly so garbled as is that of Ps. 31.5 (in *Philosophumena* 7.26.4). Let us regard this as a "free rendition."

The Homeric Quotations

In the present study I have subjected only the quotations from, and the references to, Homer to a somewhat detailed scrutiny. The following list shows that Hippolytus made use of four books of the *Ilias* by the employment of five different quotations therefrom. The *Odyssea* he found even more serviceable, for he used passages from seven books in nine quotations or references. The *Ilias* passages are the following: *Il.* 3.350 (only the phrase, "barrier of teeth"); *Il.* 7.99; *Il.* 14.201; *Il.* 15.36-38 (*γάργυρον* in v. 36); *Il.* 15.189 (quoted twice by Hippolytus).

From the *Odyssea* we meet: *Od.* 4.384-385; *Od.* 5.184-186 (*γάργυρον* for *γάργυρον* in v. 184; it is to be noted that *Il.* 4.36-38 and *Od.* 5.184-186 are identical); *Od.* 7.36 (last half of verse only); *Od.* 9.106-115; *Od.* 12.154-160 (this passage and the preceding one contain no quotations, but refer to the Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Sirens); *Od.* 10.304-306; *Od.* 24.1-2 (v. 2 only in part); *Od.* 24.5 (not quite verbatim); *Od.* 24.9-12.

It will be observed that all passages assigned to Homer by Hippolytus appear in our present-day texts. On the other hand, no passage assigned to Homer belongs to any other poet. It appears that, at the close of the second century A.D. and at the beginning of the third, Homer meant exactly what he means to us today: the *Ilias* and *Odyssea*.

Meaning of "the Poet"

Nearly four decades ago a difference of opinion arose over the meaning attached by the ancients to the expression "the poet." Without reviewing the problem in detail, I may say that A. M. Harmon, of Yale,⁴ John A. Scott,⁵ and I⁶ were among those involved in this controversy. Hippolytus sheds but little light on this problem. "The poet" to him is always Homer, with

the possible exception of the doubtful passage mentioned earlier in this study and assigned conjecturally to Parmenides by Meineke. But the plural, "the poets," also seems to Hippolytus to mean Homer. Of course, Hippolytus, being an ecclesiastical writer, also uses the expression *ὁ ποιητής* to refer to God in his capacity as Creator. At the moment I shall merely say that I am now examining the extant writings of the ante-Nicene Fathers for further light on this problem.

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NOTES

1 Read at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, Cleveland, Ohio, April 16, 1961. 2 From the *Philosophumena* various facts concerning the life of Callistus can be gleaned. He is an interesting person, hard to understand if superficially viewed. He was of slave descent. Placed in charge of his master's banking business, he sustained heavy losses, and attempted to flee. His master thereupon sent him to the treadmill, whence, nevertheless, he was able to inform the people, whose deposits he had lost, that he had certain private credits outstanding. These creditors persuaded the master to grant Callistus a temporary reprieve, so that he might make an effort to collect the money due him, and thus make good the depositors' losses. During the course of a Jewish worship, Callistus disturbed the services by approaching his debtors and asking them to settle up. The Jews indicted him for defamation of their worship, and the prefect, Fuscian, condemned him *ad metallum*, that is, the mines in Sardinia. Soon, however, he was set free. Presently he received a clerical position at Antium, which paid him a steady income. Pope Zephyrinus elevated him to a high position in the Church, and this position the erstwhile slave, bankrupt, fugitive, and exiled miner filled with distinction. (For a more detailed account of Callistus, as well as of Hippolytus, see the volume on Hippolytus by Konrad Preysing in *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter* [München 1922]). It should be noted that Callistus was the recipient of bitter attack; and also that, after the death of Zephyrinus, he was unanimously elected Pope. 3 Maximinus was Roman Emperor from 235 to 238 A.D. He was born of obscure parentage, a Gothic father and a German mother, in the region of Thrace. He became a herder of flocks, but soon his tall build and great physical strength drew the favorable attention of Septimius Severus, as a result of which fact he gained the privilege of entering the army. His advancement in the army was rapid, and eventually he was proclaimed emperor (235 A.D.) by his troops in Gaul. His reign was as unjust as it was cruel, with the result that both he and his son were slain by their own troops during the siege of Aquileia (April 238 A.D.). Maximinus was said to have been more than eight feet tall. His wife's bracelet just fitted his thumb, as a ring. He could pull a loaded wagon unaided. With a single kick of his foot he could break a horse's leg. His appetite matched his strength: a day's ration consisted of an amphora of wine and forty pounds of meat. 4 See *CP* 18 (1923) 35-47. 5 See *The Unity of Homer* (Berkeley 1921) 21-22; *CJ* 16 (1921) 367, 17 (1922) 330. 6 See *CJ* 24 (1929) 530, 26 (1931) 457-458, *CP* 25 (1930) 282-284.

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Homer and Greek Freedom of Speech

George Grote believed that freedom of speech was a legacy bequeathed to the Greece of history by those early warriors, the Achaeans, who had fought beneath the walls of Troy. In his *History of Greece* he stated:

There is yet another point of view in which it behooves us to take notice of the Council and Agora as integral portions of the legendary government of the Grecian communities. We are thus enabled to trace the employment of public speaking, as the standing engine of government, and the proximate cause of obedience, to the social infancy of the nation.¹

It will perhaps be of some interest to measure, in the light of these remarks, to what extent the Homeric poems actually contributed to the development of public discussion.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Georg Finsler argued that the agora was in fact the sovereign force in the government of the Achaeans, and that democratic processes prevailed even at the time of the Trojan War.² There are, however, serious objections to this view.

The ruler, it is true, received his royal estate from the assembly. Thus the Lycian people granted to Bellerophon an estate of vineyards and cornfields. But it was the Lycian king who bestowed upon Bellerophon his royal daughter and half the kingdom (*Il.* 6.191-195).

Nor from the concluding passage of the *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus secured the continuance of his rule by making a compact with the families of the slain suitors (*Od.* 24.482-486), can a case be made for democracy. For the suitors evidently were members, not of the populace but of the nobility, being rulers of

Dulichium, Same, Zacynthus, and Ithaca (*Il.* 245-248).

Passivity of the Homeric Assembly

At all times the Homeric assembly was strongly passive, often merely listening to the chiefs and then acclaiming their orders. When Alcinous proposed that a ship with a crew of fifty-two be furnished for Odysseus' return, no discussion occurred, though it was the people who would have to provide for the trip (*Od.* 8.34-38).

Early in the *Odyssey* Telemachus, trying to free his home from the swarm of suitors, appealed to the Ithacan assembly. His words were eloquent and persuasive, and the people felt compassion for him (*Od.* 2.39-81). But, in spite of Mentor's prodding (*Od.* 2.239-241), nothing was done to check the suitors.

When the Trojan herald Idaeus brought to the Greek army Paris's offer to return the plunder he had taken from Sparta, Diomedes jumped up to reject the proposal, and the Achaeans shouted out their approval. Agamemnon demonstrated minimal courtesy towards the army, saying: "You yourself, Idaeus, hear the word of the Achaeans" (*Il.* 7.406). But Agamemnon also made it clear that the deciding voice was his own, for the rest of his reply to Idaeus was made in a manner that completely ignored the presence of the army. Often, too, in the assembly the king spoke only to the chiefs (*Od.* 8.26; *Il.* 9.17), and they addressed their remarks to him alone (*Il.* 1.59, 19.56).

Agamemnon against the Assembly

At least once Agamemnon went directly counter to the will of the host. On the day when Chryses had asked for the return of his daughter, all the Achaeans had favored the granting of his request, though this wish of the people probably had been manifested without the formality of a regular assembly (*Il.* 1.22-23). After nine days of plague, when Achilles convened a meeting in the agora, the popular will certainly had not changed (1.53-54), so that in pressing Agamemnon to release Chryseis Achilles was giving expression not merely to his own opinion but to that of all the army. Agamem-

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Diplomas in Latin

More than a little stir has been occasioned by the official announcement at Harvard that English would now replace the traditional Latin as the language of the institution's degrees. There has even been rioting by Harvard undergraduates—two riots, in fact, during at least one of which a zealous youth in what was offered as the garb of a Roman senator discoursed in Latin on the enormity of the proposed change. The tempest, truly, has been of more than teapot dimensions.

It is unlikely, however, that the transition to the mother tongue will deter any of the already crowded number of aspirants for admission to the school, nor is it to be expected that, now or later, any current Harvard student will pack his bags (or, perhaps, gather his *lares et penates*) and ostentatiously withdraw as a protest against what he may be pleased to estimate as the deleterious and quite unacademic demeanor of his *alma mater*. Possible rumblings among alumni—some few of them, at the most—will not materially lessen the effectiveness of Harvard's campaigns for continuing support from her sons.

One must presume that Harvard knows its own business, even though some will be inclined to regret the action of the Harvard administration. There is, as every one realizes, a question of practical values. Graduates of an institution

(even, *vae nobis*, sometimes those who have pursued courses in the languages of ancient Rome) are quite commonly unable to read the wording of their academic degrees if these are expressed in Latin; yet surely the ringing and stately phrases characteristic of the college and professional diploma should be intelligible as the degree is received, and even afterwards, on those rare occasions when, except in the case of some of the professions, the prized parchment is taken out of its storage place and once again given a hasty glance. Perhaps the Harvard administration had such basic facts in mind.

On the other hand, the Harvard action seems definitely to mark a stage in American higher education—that of an acceptance of a liberal training where the ancient languages of Greece and Rome still maintain a place, but where that place is far removed from the near-universality it once possessed. It indicates, too, a cleavage from the tradition of Latin as the Western language of universal scholarship, as the tongue in which cultured men of many nations and many lands might find a medium of common intelligibility. It discourages, perhaps quite unwittingly, the enthusiastic efforts of those who still see the possibilities today for Latin as an international language of statecraft, of worldwide intercommunication, in a family of nations where some one common tongue is urgently and earnestly needed.

That some American institutions are still using Latin as the language of their degrees, and that some will probably continue so to do in the foreseeable future, are facts that offer consolation. Like comfort comes through certain foreign diplomas, also in Latin.

But there still remains the practical question of the graduate's reading of his own diploma, if it is in Latin and he is Latin-less. Perhaps the answer is a very simple one. An English translation could readily be appended—but on the reverse of the document, so that the graduate, having once grasped the sense of his diploma, might then lay it away, obverse up, or frame it with the translation forever concealed, along with the sad fact that, cultured man though he is, Latin is not numbered among his accomplishments.

—W. C. K.

Martial 9.14 (Englished)

This "friend" whom your table procured for you
And your banquets so lavishly spread,
Do you really think that this new-found friend
Is a friend when the truth is said?

It's the boar that you serve and the mullet too
And the oysters he loves no end,
Not you, for if I were to dine as well,
He'd soon be my closest "friend."

Ralph Marcellino

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Homer and Greek Freedom of Speech

(Continued from page 87)

non with poor grace agreed to send Chryseis back to her father, but in retaliation he seized Achilles' prize (*Il.* 1.183-184). Agamemnon's action clearly went contrary to the popular will, not merely because Achilles was punished for having championed an opinion which was that of the whole force but because it meant that henceforth the people would be without Achilles' help in battle. Yet on being confronted with Agamemnon's arbitrary action the assembled army remained silent.

The submissiveness and passivity of the assembly are especially clear in the long passage which precedes the Catalogue of the Ships. When Agamemnon proposed that the Achaeans return home, the soldiers' weariness and their eagerness to quit Troy were manifested in the enthusiasm with which they rushed for the ships (*Il.* 2.149-154). Yet some minutes later, when Odysseus had herded all the soldiers back to the agora and had rebuked them, they nosily approved his proposal that they continue the war (*Il.* 2.333-335). When, at the conclusion of the meeting, Agamemnon gave orders to prepare for battle, these same soldiers who had so eagerly been dragging the ships down to the sea cheered his commands (*Il.* 2.394).

Divisions within the Assembly

After Troy had been taken, there was an assembly in which Agamemnon and Menelaus quarreled bitterly, the latter demanding an immediate departure. The assembly broke up

in disorder, some of the drunken soldiers stalking out with Menelaus, others remaining behind with Agamemnon (*Od.* 3.137-157). But this was no popular revolt. It was a schism caused by one of the nobles, in this instance the brother of the king.

Seymour appears to err when he writes that the sons of Atreus called this assembly in order to lay their dispute before the soldiers, not to promulgate their will.³ Nothing in the language of the passage indicates that Menelaus or Agamemnon intended to defer to the army's choice.

An assembly at Ithaca split into similar factions on the question of fighting against Odysseus (*Od.* 24.463-466). But the leaders of the groups were two noblemen, Halitherses and Eupheithes.

Moreover, if an Achaean spoke before the assembly, he had to take care not to offend one more powerful than himself. Thus, when the cause of the plague was being sought, Calchas hesitated to address the host lest his words give offense to Agamemnon (*Il.* 1.78-79), and Achilles, for opposing him, was deprived of Briseis.

The ugliest man in the army, Thersites, was roughly handled because he dared speak insultingly to the chieftains. Odysseus with a staff beat him upon the back and shoulders and threatened, should this incident be repeated, to drive him naked from the agora.

For two reasons, then, freedom of speech did not exist in Homeric times: because the assembly itself was a passive group, ultimately subject to the will of king and nobles, and because speakers could be easily intimidated.

Esteem for the Assembly

Yet the Achaeans greatly esteemed the assembly. One reason for this respect was that before the assembly could be gained great fame. Once Homer actually spoke of it as "bringing men glory" (*Il.* 1.490). This seems to have been especially true of King Nestor, "the clear-voiced man of the assembly" (*Il.* 1.248). He was far beyond the age for effective action on the battlefield; yet because he was a persuasive speaker he was constantly treated with deference by the other chieftains. In the *Odyssey* Odysseus remarks that, when a fine speaker comes to the city, the people look upon him as a

god (*Od.* 8.170-173). Elsewhere in the poems persuasiveness is equally esteemed. Thus on the Scaean Gate Antenor spoke admiringly of the eloquence that poured from Odysseus' lips, likening it to the snowflakes of winter (*Il.* 3. 221-223).

Again, on the occasion of the Embassy, Phoenix recalled to Achilles that he had instructed him in all things worthwhile. Phoenix, indicating the qualities required of a great hero, summarized his instruction by stating that he had taught Achilles to be both a speaker of words and a doer of deeds (*Il.* 9.442-443).

Thus in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* there is an evident respect for eloquence. Such esteem could not but encourage a tradition of public discussion that characterizes the Greeks of later centuries.

Effective Persuasion

Moreover, the Homeric poems contained examples of extremely effective persuasion. The long speeches, particularly in Books 1, 2, and 9 of the *Iliad*, were in their ingenuous way masterpieces of rhetoric, and would serve as models for the orators of later generations. Though Homer presents no manual of rhetoric, and though centuries would pass before the practice of effective eloquence would be reduced to laws and rules by Corax and Tisias, the aspiring speaker could learn much from a study of the Homeric poems.

That the poems were studied is, of course, well known. Plato, with anything but approval, spoke of Homer as the educator of Greece (*Resp.* 606E). Since Greek schoolboys memorized vast passages of the poems, their intimate familiarity with the two epics would facilitate the study of the speeches, just as it would keep the Greeks conscious of the prominent position accorded by the Achaeans to practical eloquence.

With what conclusions, then, may this paper terminate? First, that democratic processes and true freedom of expression are not to be found in the Homeric poems. Second, that the respect for eloquence and the fine examples of effective persuasion which the poems contain would encourage later generations to the free and open discussion of matters of state. In this sense, then, can be traced back to Homer, as Grote

Tacitus and Professional Philosophers

The purpose of this article is to discover the attitude that Tacitus takes towards the professional philosophers who appear in his works. If it can be shown that he does not disparage the philosophers for their philosophy, but actually praises their actions which result from it, we shall have strong additional evidence for the view that Tacitus did not distrust philosophy.¹

The first of these philosophers whom I shall discuss is Musonius Rufus. We glean some information as to Tacitus' opinion of Musonius in his discussion of the reasons for the exile of the philosopher:

... Verginium Flavum et Musonium Rufum claritudo nominis expulit: nam Verginius studia iuvenum eloquentia, Musonius praeceptis sapientiae fovebat (*Ann.* 15.71).

Here Tacitus acknowledges the splendor of Musonius' reputation.

In another instance, Tacitus shows how Musonius attempted to bring about peace in the civil strife that occurred between the legions of Vitellius and the soldiers of Petilius Cerealis, the Flavian commander:

... Miscuerat se legatis Musonius Rufus equestris ordinis, studium philosophiae et placita Stoicorum aemulatus; coeptabatque permixtus manipulis, bona pacis ac belli discrimina disserens, armatos monere; id plerisque ludibrio, pluribus taedio; nec deerant qui propellerent proculearentque, ni admonitu modestissimi cuiusque et aliis minitantiis omisisset intempestivam sapientiam (*Hist.* 3.81).

This is the only instance where Tacitus could be interpreted as criticizing Musonius. It is quite clear, however, that Tacitus is merely describing the reaction of the soldiery to Musonius' efforts for peace and that these are not necessarily his own views on the subject. From the word, *intempestivam*, we see that Tacitus did not regard the occasion as timely for the

stated, "the employment of public speaking as the standing engine of government."⁴

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NOTES

- 1 G. Grote, *A History of Greece* (London 1884) II 77.
- 2 G. Finsler, "Das homerische Königtum," *NJbb* 17 (1906) 320, 328.
- 3 T. Seymour, "The Homeric Assemblies and Aristotle," *CR* 20 (1906) 338.
- 4 The present study is an expansion of a paper read before the American Philological Association at the Annual Meeting of December 28-30, 1960.

preaching of philosophy. This is by no means a condemnation of Musonius or philosophy, but means only that Tacitus felt the particular circumstances prevented a proper reception of Musonius' philosophical tenets.

Elsewhere, Musonius is praised by Tacitus for his sincerity. We have evidence of this in what is said of Musonius for his accusation of perjury against Publius Egnatius Celer:

... Insignis publica severitate dies ne privatim quidem laude caruit: iustum iudicium explesse Musonius videbatur; diversa fama Demetrio Cynicam sectam professus quod manifestum reum ambitiosius quam honestius defendisset (*Hist.* 4.40).

Celer, a Stoic philosopher, had been branded a hypocrite by Tacitus (*Ann.* 16.32). Celer was regarded as one who had the external appearances of virtue but was corrupt at heart. This again was no attack by Tacitus on philosophy, but a criticism of a philosopher who did not live up to his own precepts. Moreover, the indictment of Demetrius was not a judgment on Cynic philosophy, but it was a castigation of the lack of sincerity and excessive ambition in Demetrius.

Sketch of Helvidius Priscus

In his biographical sketch of Helvidius Priscus, Tacitus leaves little doubt of his attitude towards Helvidius and the philosophy that he professed:

Helvidius Priscus, regione Italiae Caracina e municipio Cluxiis, patre, qui ordinem primipili duxisset, ingenium illustre altioribus studiis iuvenis admodum dedit, non ut plerique, quo nomine magnifico segne otium velaret, sed quo firmiter adversus fortuita rem publicam capesseret; doctores sapientiae secutus est qui sola bona quae honesta, mala tantum quae turpia, potentiam, nobilitatem ceteraque extra animum neque bonis neque malis adnumerant, quaestorius adhuc a Paeto Thrasea gener delectus e moribus soceri nihil aequae ac libertatem hausit, civis, senator, maritus, gener, amicus, cunctis vitae officiis aequabilis, opum contemptor, recti pervicax, constans adversus metus; erant quibus adpetentior famae videretur, quando etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae novissima exiit. Ruina soceri in exilium pulsus, ut Galbae principatu rediit, Marcellum Eprium, delatorem Thraseae, accusare adgreditur: ea ultio, incertum maior an iustior, senatum in studia diduxerat; nam si caderet Marcellus, agmen reorum sternebatur; primo minax certamen et egregiis utriusque orationibus testatum; mox dubia voluntate Galbae, multis senatorum deprecantibus, omisit Priscus, variis, ut sunt hominum ingenia, sermonibus moderationem laudantium aut constantiam requirementum (*Hist.* 4.5.6).

This passage is obviously a eulogy of Helvidius; and as it praises the influence that philosophy exerted on his character, it is worth analyzing closely. Tacitus tells us that Helvidius applied

himself to lofty studies, not as most men do in order to hide their slothful leisure by an imposing name, but that by this study he might enter upon public affairs better fortified against fortune. Certainly this cannot be interpreted as a criticism of philosophy. The only criticism is against those who misuse philosophy, but those who, like Helvidius, use philosophy properly are to be praised as is philosophy itself.

In this same passage, Tacitus tells us that Helvidius especially imbibed the virtue of the spirit of liberty. This virtue, of course, was constantly preached by the Stoics. The passage tells us that there were some people to whom it seemed that Helvidius was seeking after reputation. It does not mean that Tacitus believed that Helvidius was seeking only for renown. The statement that the last passion to be shed by a wise man is glory is not to be taken as a condemnation of philosophers, but means merely that in the opinion of Tacitus the desire for glory is the final desire that is to be overcome in the striving for philosophic calm. Moreover, the remark:

... variis ut sunt hominum ingenia, sermonibus moderationem laudantium aut constantiam requirementum cannot be regarded as deprecatory of Helvidius or his philosophy. Both moderation and constancy were Stoic attributes. Therefore, it was merely a question of which attribute was to be emphasized at the time. It was a nice dilemma, but Helvidius chose moderation. The evidence that the passage furnishes points to Tacitus' admiration and praise of Helvidius, his virtuous character, and the philosophy which helped to form that character. In fact, the whole sketch is done in terms of Stoic philosophy.

Possible Inconsistencies

Tacitus shows us his regard for Thrasea Paetus when he refers to Nero's desire to put Thrasea to death:

... Trucidatis tot insignibus viris ad postremum Nero virtutem ipsam excindere concupivit interfecto Thrasea Paeto et Barea Sorano, olim utrisque infensus, et accedentibus causis in Thraseam quod senatu egressus est cum de Agrippina referretur, ut memoravi (*Ann.* 16.21).

In this passage, after calling Thrasea virtue itself, Tacitus alludes to Thrasea's departure from the senate, a departure which occurred because Thrasea was irritated over the way

Nero was being flattered. This departure had been criticized by Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.12), for Thrasea had violated the Stoic belief that the wise man will never yield to his passions or feelings. In no way can this be considered a criticism of philosophy. Further evidence of Tacitus' high regard for Thrasea is seen in a reference to both Thrasea and Seneca as *egregius viris* (*Ann.* 15.23). Tacitus also has high praise for Thrasea in contrast to Nero (*Ann.* 16.24).

Since we have seen that Tacitus had the highest regard for Thrasea and his philosophy, it is apparent that the Tacitean presentation of the death scene of Thrasea is a eulogy. This is related in some detail in *Annales* 16.34. Here Tacitus shows Thrasea acting as a Stoic philosopher to the very end. Tacitus considers the people with whom Thrasea was conversing as illustrious. Thrasea was engaged in philosophical discussion when he was informed of his death decree. If Tacitus had wanted to disparage Thrasea or philosophy, he certainly would not have gone into such detail on Thrasea's calm reaction to the news. Indeed, Tacitus portrays vividly how Thrasea adhered to his philosophy in his final moments. Maintaining his philosophic composure to the very end, he sought to keep his plight from harming others. Happy because Helvidius, his son-in-law, was only to be banished from Italy, he was desirous of remaining an example of constancy.

Helvidius and Thrasea in an Early Work

Any remaining doubts, concerning the attitude of Tacitus towards Thrasea Paetus, are dispelled by the great eulogy of Helvidius Priscus and Thrasea Paetus in the *Agricola*:

... Legimus, cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thrasea, Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo auctores sed in libros quoque eorum saevitum, delegato triumphis ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur; scilicet illo igne vocem populi Romani et libertatem senatus et conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsi insuper sapientiae professoribus atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret (*Agr.* 2).

Here Tacitus is very explicit. Not only was rage let loose against the authors, but against their writings. Tacitus considers their philosophical writings to be monuments of the most

exalted genius, "the conscience of the human race." The expulsion of the professors of philosophy means that everything good is banished. This passage is a devastating rebuttal against those who maintain that Tacitus disparaged philosophy and philosophers. Not only are the philosophers and their philosophy praised, but, in the belief of Tacitus, they are absolutely necessary for all mankind.

Seneca in Tacitus

The most famous stoic philosopher who appears in the works of Tacitus is Seneca. Professor William Hardy Alexander,² who is sympathetic towards Seneca, has examined all the extant material provided by Tacitus on Seneca in order to determine Tacitus' attitude towards him. He concludes that Tacitus does not give a judgment or appreciation of Seneca.³ He does admit, however, that Tacitus never criticizes the moral worth of Seneca, although he does connect him with unpleasant events.⁴ Popular gossip involved Seneca in the murder of Agrippina, Nero's wife.⁵ The indictment of Seneca by Publius Suillius also injured Seneca's reputation.⁶ Suillius had pointed out that, despite his precepts of philosophy, Seneca had amassed the fortune of three hundred million sesterces in four years.⁷ Alexander points out that Tacitus never actually condemns Seneca for any of his compromises with philosophy.⁸ Even if it is not clear what opinion Tacitus had of Seneca, this would merely mean that, on the basis of the evidence, Tacitus could not decide whether the good outweighed the evil. It certainly cannot be interpreted as a criticism of Seneca as a philosopher.

A Judgment on Seneca

It is my belief, however, that Tacitus does give a definite judgment on the moral character of Seneca. The least we may say is that when Seneca lives up to his philosophy he is praised by Tacitus. We see this brought out in Tacitus' comment on the death of Burrus, the other guardian of Nero:

... Mors Burri infregit Senecae potentiam, quia nec bonis artibus idem virium erat altero velut duce amoto, et Nero ad deteriores inclinabat (*Ann.* 14.52).

This passage shows that Seneca restrained Nero from vice. Alexander says that these words do indicate a high appreciation of Seneca's personality.⁹ We should also bear in mind that both Seneca and Thrasea Paetus are referred to by Tacitus in the phrase *egregius viris* (*Ann.* 15. 23). Consider too how sympathetically Tacitus introduces Seneca in the *Annales* as now extant:

... Ibaturque in caedes, nisi Afranius Burrus et Annaeus Seneca obviam issent. Hi rectores, imperatoriaque iuventae et, rarum in societate potentiae, concordēs, diversa arte ex aequo pollebant, Burrus militaribus curis et severitate morum Seneca praeceptis eloquentiae et comitate honesta, iuvantes in vicem, quo facilius lubricam principis aetatem, si virtutem aspernaretur, voluptatibus concessis retinerent (*Ann.* 13.2).

Tacitus' description of Seneca's death is, of course, moving in the fullest sense (*Ann.* 15. 62). In it, Tacitus gives us a picture of a Seneca who lives up to his own philosophical precepts in death. At the news of his condemnation, Seneca portrays true philosophic calm. He regards the example of his life as the most valued possession that he is leaving behind. He exhorts those around him to live up to the Stoic virtue of fortitude. His virtuous life is to be the consolation of his wife. He permits his wife to die with him because he does not wish to hinder her glory. This would appear to be Tacitus' own opinion. The entire death scene is very impressive, and I believe it was made deliberately so by Tacitus. We may be well assured that Seneca is receiving the highest praise from Tacitus for most truly living up to his philosophy in his death agony. A striking remark by Tacitus on the burial of Seneca adds further confirmation to this belief:

... Exim balneo inlatus et vapore eius exanimatus, sine ullo funeris sollemni crematur: ita codicillis praescripserat, cum etiam tum praedives et praepotens supremis suis consuleret (*Ann.* 15.64).

In my opinion this final remark of any consequence on Seneca by Tacitus is his verdict on the philosopher. Even when Seneca was in his powerful prime he had had thought for his last days.

Although it has not been my intention to pronounce a judgment on Seneca, nevertheless the Tacitean verdict seems quite clear.

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NOTES

- 1 For the text of Tacitus I have used *Cornelii Taciti Opera*, edited by Fredericus Haase, I-II (Lipsiae 1855).
- 2 W. H. Alexander, "The Tacitean non Liqueo on Seneca," *Univ. of California Publications in Class. Phil.* 14 (1952) 269-386. 3 Ibid. 350. 4 Ibid. 373. 5 Ibid. 323. 6 Ibid. 323. 7 Ibid. 320. 8 Ibid. 373. 9 Ibid. 328.

Breviora

Editor's Note: Three items usually scheduled for the April number—Deaths among Classicists, III, Meetings of Classical Interest, III, and Personalia Quaedam, III—are not appearing because of the late publication of this number. They are slated to be resumed in the December number of Volume 38.

Book Review

Nicholas Yalouris, *Classical Greece: The Elgin Marbles of the Parthenon*. Photographed by F. L. Kennett. The Acanthus History of Sculpture, Volume 2, edited by Sir Herbert Read and H. D. Molesworth. Greenwich, Connecticut, New York Graphic Society, 1960. Pp. xv, 32; 32 plates. \$6.95.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the New York Graphic Society have worked together to bring to the public the magnificent UNESCO *World Art Series*. It is expected that each volume will reflect characteristic and significant artistic achievements of UN member nations. Certainly the *Classical Greece* volume with its representation of the Marbles of the Parthenon reflects the greatest artistic achievement of the Greek people at any period during their long and venerable history. Not only artistically but culturally this volume beautifully recalls the Golden Age of Greece vividly and vigorously.

The brilliant full page 11½ by 14½ inch black and white photographs are done by a specialist in sculptural photography, F. L. Kennett. The illuminating text by Nicholas Yalouris, Director of the Olympia Museum and Ephor of Antiquities in the Western Peloponnese, provides the general reader with a readable, competent, and concise description of the historical setting of the Parthenon, together with precise descriptions and discussions of the metopes, the frieze, pediments (east and west), and an evaluation of the significance of the sculpture.

Mr. Yalouris believes the sculptures to be the undoubted work of Phidias, and when it comes to an evaluation of the sculptural representations, he cannot fail but say:

"Whether they represent gods or mortals, the figures have both a human and a superhuman appearance; never before has the human presence been rendered with such completeness nor the divine power with such imposing grandeur. Material creation and spirit, body and soul, world and man, eternity and the fleeting moment, all tending to oppose each other, are held together in a harmony than which nothing more skilful has ever been devised by man" (p. xiv).

This book captures the magnificence of Parthenon sculptural art and is an excellent introduction for the general reader to the art of Greece's most glorious period.

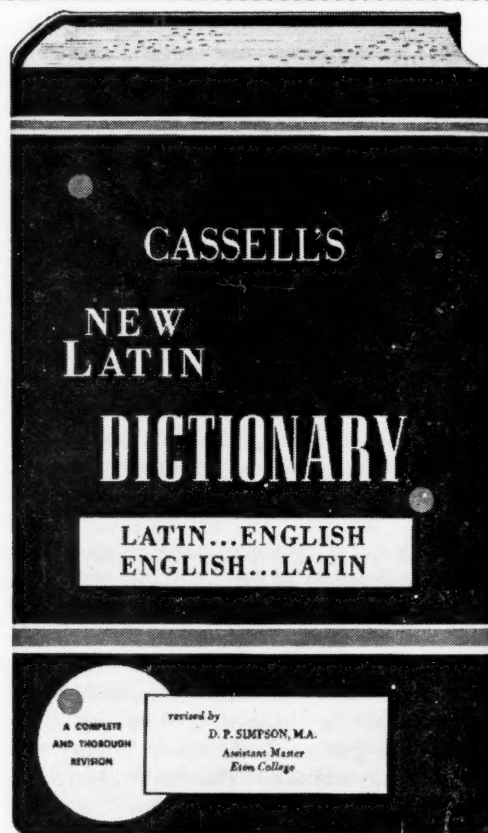
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Nature herself seemed to have fixed the Eastern limit of the Latin language at the Adriatic, and even in Italy Greek was equally familiar with Latin to the educated classes. Suetonius, Fronto, Hadrian himself, wrote in Latin and Greek indifferently.

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